

## HOW DO I DEVELOP THE ROAD MAP? (Creating a Strategic Communications Plan)

Developing a strategic communications plan will provide you with a roadmap as you design and implement all of your transportation and air quality program activities.

Your plan should be designed to meet the information needs of your target audience(s), which you identified using the market research discussed in the “Research” and “Community Assessment” sections of this toolkit. Its scope will be determined by the resources you and your coalition partners have for the effort. Use the worksheet at the end of this section to help you develop a draft plan. Conduct brainstorming sessions with your staff and outside experts to seek input and creative ideas. Once you have a draft in hand, hold a meeting with your coalition partners to solicit their recommendations. Incorporating suggestions from your partners will help solidify their support for the program. Consider your plan to be a working document that will be revised over time as your program moves forward.

### Key Components of the Plan:

#### *Establish Communications Goals and Objectives*

- § Begin your plan by broadly defining the overall issue or problem your program will address (e.g., a high percentage of air pollution is caused by individuals making optional trips during peak drive-time in poorly maintained vehicles).
- § After reviewing the goals and objectives of the *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air* initiative, list any additional goals and objectives your program is designed to accomplish in your community. In order for your program to be successful, these should be realistic, clear, and action-oriented.
- § Your program goals should be specific and measurable where possible. For example, increase by five percent the number of young drivers who regularly maintain their cars (if it is possible to measure this group). Your objectives are the intermediate steps needed to achieve the goal and may be tied to increasing awareness or knowledge, changing attitudes, improving skills, or reducing barriers (e.g., increase by fifteen percent the number of drivers education classes that include car maintenance information in their curriculum).

#### *Define Your Target Audience*

- § During the research phase of *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air*, we learned that the message attributes that were most motivating *C convenience, effectiveness, and simplicity of specific actions* C were those that appealed to a very broad segment of the general public. Focus group research also showed that people were very sensitive to the message tone and manner. These findings played an important role in guiding creative development of the print and broadcast advertisements produced for *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air*. Often, the primary

audience for a message will be a subset of the general population. Therefore, if there are other audience(s) within your community that you plan to reach with your program, list them here. Then, identify your secondary audience(s) B those who can influence the primary audience and help implement the program (e.g., environmental organizations, employers, teachers, the media).

- \$ Try to further define specific segments of your target audience(s) by their behavior or other considerations. For example, among the general public, are you trying to reach people who currently drive alone to work every day? Who carpool or take the bus once a week? Who only pay attention to their cars= maintenance when a problem arises? Also, consider factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, income, geography, and language. For example, you may be interested in designing a program to reach men ages 22-30 who only get their vehicles serviced when there is a problem.

### *Identify Key Messages, Materials, and Activities*

- \$ In addition to the key messages emphasized in the *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air* materials, briefly summarize any additional information, attitudes, or skills you want to communicate to your community and/or specific target audience(s). Also, describe any supplementary materials that need to be developed based on the types of channels you select in the next step. For example, if you plan to generate media coverage, consider creating a press kit or other media materials.
- \$ This section is also where you should define major activities to be conducted, such as strategy development meetings, coalition partnership activities, media outreach, a kick-off event, community outreach activities, presentations and promotional efforts, and marketing of the print and broadcast advertisements.

### *Select Communications Channels*

In the “Community Assessment” section of this guide, you identified the most credible and popular communications channels among your target audience(s). For your plan, you should list those that will best achieve your objectives (e.g., brochures, direct mail, news stories/editorials, posters, public service or paid advertising, curricula, etc.) To help you choose which channels to use, keep the following criteria in mind:

- \$ **Communications objectives.** Are you trying to raise awareness, build skills, or create a social norm?
- \$ **Target audience(s).** Does a newspaper or magazine have more sway with your target audience than television? How many people does each channel reach?
- \$ **Cost.** Your budget may influence the type of distribution channels you select.
- \$ **Multiple exposures to messages.** Consider how often a media outlet might

feature your message (e.g., multiple airings of an advertisement or a series of feature articles).

- \$ **Use a mix of channels.** Consider an appropriate mix of channels to reach the target audience(s) over time. For example, a news story will generally run only once, while a radio advertisement may receive repeated airings.

### ***Identify Coalition Partners***

- \$ As discussed in the “Coalition Building and Maintenance” section of this toolkit, working with other organizations and individuals who care about this issue is a cost-effective way to extend the reach and credibility of your program and messages. List all of your potential coalition partners in your plan (e.g., local government agencies, business or industry organizations, transportation and environmental groups, consumer and civic organizations, advertising and public relations agencies, local media).
- \$ Describe suggested roles for your partners (e.g., provide in-kind services, donate free airtime, distribute program materials) and how you plan to seek their involvement and continued support for the initiative. This will include highlighting specific messages and materials and emphasizing benefits to specific partners (see the *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air* marketing kit for ideas), ideas for involving them throughout the life of the program (e.g., conducting regular meetings), and methods/tools to measure their participation (e.g., the level and content of their activities in support of the program).

### ***Determine Evaluation Plan***

- \$ Assessing your program=s effectiveness is critical to its continued success. A strong evaluation will help you to determine if your program has met its goals and objectives; demonstrate to your funders that your program is effective; guide adjustments to your program; and support future funding.
- \$ Your plan should describe: 1) your approach for reviewing existing research; 2) your plans to conduct surveys and focus groups to explore your target audiences’ current knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (KAB), as well as formative research to test your concepts and materials; and 3) a process evaluation that assesses the development, management, and effectiveness of your program implementation; and 4) a strategy for conducting an outcome evaluation that measures whether the program achieved its goals and objectives. Typically, outcome evaluation is conducted through a pre- and post-KAB survey of your target audience(s). Your plan should identify a resource to conduct such a survey. Additional information can be found in the “Evaluation” section of this toolkit.

### ***Create a Timeline***

- § Develop a step-by-step timeline to keep your program, staff, and partners on track. Make sure to build in reasonable review time for all products and activities.

Ask your staff and coalition partners to review the timeline to ensure that they can carry out their responsibilities in the proposed time frame.

### ***Determine Staffing and Management***

- § Create an organizational chart for your program management, including specific staff responsibilities and anticipated coalition partner roles. Ensure accountability by identifying a project leader for each product or activity.

### ***Create a Budget***

- § List all your anticipated expenses using the categories listed on the attached worksheet as a starting point. As well as your own agency=s resources, list potential funding sources (e.g., in-kind donations, corporate funding, donated media airtime, discounted ad placement, and coalition partners printing/distributing materials).

***IT ALL ADDS UP TO CLEANER AIR***  
**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN WORKSHEET**

1. Title of Program: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Program Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Definition of Issue: (Why is the program being developed?)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Primary Target Audience(s): (Who is affected; whose behavior are you trying to influence?) List in priority order.
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Specific Target Audience Segments: (List any subsegments by behavior and other variables, such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, income, geography, and language)
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Secondary Target Audience(s): (List those who influence the primary audience(s) or help implement the program, e.g., media, employers, educators)
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Communications Goals: (Specify measurable desired actions)
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Communications Objectives: (Intermediate steps to achieve goals, such as changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and social norms; quantify when possible)
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Communications Channels to Reach Each Target Audience: (For each audience, identify your objective and the relevant channels)  
  
Audience #1  
Channels: \_\_\_\_\_ Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

Audience #2

Channels: \_\_\_\_\_ Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Potential Partners and Activities: (List)

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11. Potential Messages, Materials, and Activities:

Audience #1:

Primary Messages/Content: \_\_\_\_\_

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Materials: \_\_\_\_\_

Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

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(Repeat for each audience)

12. Evaluation

Type of Evaluation	Proposed Methodology
Formative research	(e.g., focus group testing)
Process evaluation	(e.g., monthly reports)
Outcome evaluation	(e.g., pre- and post-surveys of target audience)

13. Program Timeline

Activity	Due Date	Individual Responsible

#### 14. Management and Staffing of Program

<b>Major Program Activity</b>	<b>Lead Staff Member or Partner</b>
Project Direction/Management	
Research and Evaluation	
Strategy Development	
Materials Development/Creative	
Media Outreach/Public Relations	
Administration/Budget	
Partnership Building	

#### 15. Program Budget

Estimated costs for staff time, materials production, materials dissemination, etc.

<b>Budget Item</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
Program Coordinator Salary	
Research and Evaluation	
Program Planning	
Materials Development	
Media Outreach	
Partnership Building	
Temporary Help	
Phone	
Postage/Distribution	
Duplication	
Travel (local and long distance)	

Potential sources of funding for this initiative (e.g., CMAQ funds, corporate contributions, in-kind support, discounted ad placement):

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